



**United States Senate  
Committee on Small Business  
and Entrepreneurship**

*Olympia J. Snowe, Chair*

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<http://sbc.senate.gov>

For Immediate Release

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**Snowe: Provide Small Businesses With Affordable Health Insurance**

*Washington, D.C. - Senator Olympia J. Snowe (R-ME), Chair of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship and a senior member of the Senate Finance Committee, issued the following statement regarding today's vote in the U.S. House of Representatives on Association Health Plan legislation (H.R. 525):*

"Today, the House of Representatives is scheduled to pass for the sixth time legislation that provides small businesses in different states with the freedom to pool their employees together to create health insurance plans. Without Association Health Plans, small businesses will continue to be trapped in markets that prevent their employees from receiving the same benefits offered by large companies.

"The American people have consistently and overwhelmingly told Congress that access to health insurance and the explosive growth in premiums are a major concern. It is a crisis for small businesses and their employees. Unfortunately, here in the Senate there has been no action to confront this worsening national crisis that threatens job creation, economic growth and the ability of small business owners to compete in today's global economy.

"In the interest of basic fairness, as well as the continued health of small business employees and our economy, this dire situation must be addressed. The time for providing relief to the men and women who are the foundation of job creation and sustained economic growth has arrived. The Senate must pass AHP legislation this year so millions of small business owners can provide affordable health insurance choices to our nation's most indispensable employees."

*This year Senator Snowe introduced "The Small Business Health Fairness Act of 2005" (S. 406), a fair, fiscally sound, and tested approach that allows small businesses to pool employees in Association Health Plans on a national basis. They provide small businesses with the freedom to create a plan that meets the specific needs of their members and their employees. AHPs present an opportunity to drastically shrink the ranks of America's nearly 45 million uninsured, without significantly expanding the health care bureaucracy or increasing federal spending.*

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